

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NASSAU 01508 01 OF 02 232046Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 221819Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8665

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NASSAU 1508

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, MARR, BF, US

SUBJ: LOS AND FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS

REF: NASSAU 1427

1. SUMMARY: INVOLVING AS IT DOES THE NATIONAL POLITY OF THE BAHAMAS, RECOGNITION OF THE ARCHIPELAGIC PRINCIPLE ALONG THE LINES OF THE JANUARY 1975 USG-GCOB UNDERSTANDING IS VITAL TO THE BAHAMAS AND THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE ON ITS FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA (SEE CASPS FOR 1974, 5 AND 6). OF NEARLY EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO THIS RESOURCE-POOR DEVELOPING COUNTRY IS EXCLUSIVE EXPOLITATION RIGHTS TO A 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE AND TO A BROADLY DEFINED CONTINENTAL SHELF. IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT A LAW OF THE SEA TREATY AND IN PARTICULAR RECOGNITION OF THE ARCHIPELAGIC PRINCIPLE HAVE BEEN CLOSELY LINKED IN GCOB THINKING TO OUR MILITARY FACILITIES HERE. GIVEN OUR MOST RECENT INDICATION SEPTEMBER 3 (REF) OF THE RATHER RAPID EROSION OF MINEXTAFF ADDERLEY'S EARLIER OPTIMISM (NASSAU 0581 AND 1244) THAT AN LOS TREATY INCORPORATING THE ARCHIPELAGIC PRINCIPLE WOULD BE ACHIEVED AND GIVEN THE FACT THAT ON JANUARY 1975 PRIVTE SUPPORT OF THE BAHAMAS' POSITION ON THIS MATTER IS CONTINGENT UPON SUCH A UNIVERSAL TREATY, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO SPECULATE ON HOW THESE LOS ISSUES MIGHT AFFECT THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS AND ON HOW WE ADDRESS THOSE ISSUES BILATERALLY WITH THE BAHAMAS. END SUMMARY

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PAGE 02 NASSAU 01508 01 OF 02 232046Z

2. WHILE OUR RECENT REPORTING HAS PLACED EMPHASIS ON

EXPLAINING GCOB SLOWNESS TO REENGAGE ON FACILITIES TO ITS INABILITY TO MANAGE MORE THAN ONE MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY NEGOTIATION (A POINT UNDERLINED BY PRIMIN PINDLING IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH UNDER SECRETARY ROGERS), WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY MADE CLEAR THAT GCOB, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, WOULD NOT ENTER INTO FACILITY AGREEMENT UNTIL AFTER LOS/ARCHIPELAGO ISSUE WAS RESOLVED. CERTAINLY, PINDLING'S PUBLIC STATEMENT IN JULY 1975 THAT "ONCE (THE ARCHIPELAGO PRINCIPLE IS) . . . ACCEPTED BY GREAT BRITAIN AND THE U.S. . . ., BASES CAN BE DISCUSSED," AND REPORTS OF OPINIONS WITHIN THE MINEXTAFF THAT OUR "GENEROUS" PRIVATE POSITION ON ARCHIPELAGOS ARE ATTRIBUTABLE IN PART TO OUR DESIRE TO RETAIN THE "VITAL" AUTC FACILITY POINT IN THAT DIRECTION AND MAY EXPLAIN THE SLOW MOVEMENT ON FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS TO DATE. NOW THAT THEY SEE THE POSSIBILITY OF A UNIVERSAL LOS TREATY SLIPPING FROM THEIR GRASP, THE GCOB MAY WELL REINJECT THEIR LOS CONCERNS INTO THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS IN AN ATTEMPT TO SECURE AT LEAST OUR PUBLIC BILATERAL AGREEMENT TO THEIR REQUIREMENTS. IN FACT, EMBASSY HAS REPEATEDLY POINTED OUT THAT, WHILE OUR CONCESSIONS TO GCOB ARCHIPELAGIC DESIRES WERE MADE WITHIN LOS CONTEXT AND CONDITIONED ON A SATISFACTORY TREATY, FAILING A SUCCESSFUL LOS WE COULD BE CERTAIN THAT GCOB WOULD FACE US WITH ARCHIPELAGIC ISSUE IN A BILATERAL CONTEXT. ONCE HAVING AGREED TO ARCHIPELAGIC DEFINITION WITH THE GCOB AND THE GCOB HAVING FAITHFULLY FULFILLED ITS COMMITMENT TO US TO PRESS FOR PASSAGE THROUGH STRAITS AND OTHERWISE SUPPORT FOR U.S. POSITIONS ON LOS ISSUES, IT SEEMED INEVITABLE THAT THEY WOULD EXPECT LOGIC OF AN LOS FAILURE WOULD BE U.S. SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUSLY DEFINED ARCHIPELAGO. FACT THAT U.S. HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED DETERMINATION TO ASSERT UNILATERAL EXPLOITATION OF A 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE HAS NOT GONE UNNOTICED IN BAHAMAS AND DOUBTLESS WOULD BE VIEWED AS FURTHER JUSTIFICATION FOR PRESSING FOR U.S. BLESSING FOR SIMILAR GCOB MOVES DESIGNED TO MEET BAHAMIAN REQUIREMENTS.

3. CHIEF AMONG THOSE REQUIREMENT, SPELLED OUT VERY CONCISELY BY AMBASSADOR L. B. JOHNSON IN A MAY 11, 1976 SPEECH IN WINTER PARK, FLORIDA, WOULD BE U.S. AGREEMENT TO A MEDIAN LINE SPLITTING OVERLAPPING 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONES. SINCE THE BAHAMIANS WOULD MEASURE THAT ZONE AND THEIR 12-MILE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 NASSAU 01508 01 OF 02 232046Z

TERRITORIAL SEA FROM THE ARCHIPELAGIC BASELINE TENTATIVELY AGREED TO PRIVATELY IN JANUARY 1975, THE GCOB WOULD PROBABLY ENVISAGE A PUBLIC REAFFIRMATION OF THAT AGREEMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE TYPE OF "PACKAGE DEAL" THEY PUBLICLY AGREED TO IN CARACAS IN SUMMER 1974. ADDITIONALLY, THE GCOB MIGHT SEEK USG SUPPORT FOR A CONTINENTAL SHELF BASED ON THE "NATURAL PROLONGATION OF THE LAND MASS INTO THE SEA". ACCORDING TO A MAP DISTRIBUTED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S

GEOGRAPHER, A SHELF SO DEFINED WOULD GIVE THE BAHAMAS

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PAGE 01 NASSAU 01508 02 OF 02 232010Z

63

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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R 221819Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8666

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 NASSAU 1508

EXDIS

CONTROL OF NEARLY THE ENTIRE BLAKE PLATEAU, WHICH JOHNSON HAS DESCRIBED AS "ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST INTERESTING ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE NATURAL PROLONGATION OF THE LANDMASS TO DISTANCES AND DEPTHS CONSIDERABLY BEYOND THE 200 METER ISOBATH". EQUALLY INTERESTING ARE THE PERSISTENT RUMORS OF POTENTIAL OIL OR GAS RESERVES ON THAT PLATEAU. OTHER GCOB DESIDERATA WHICH COULD CAUSE COMPLICATIONS VIA-A-VIS OPERATING RIGHTS AT THE FACILITIES AND GENERAL FREEDOM OF THE SEAS ARE POTENTIALLY STRINGENT RESTRICTIONS ON POLLUTION, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND PIPELINES AND CABLES.

4. IN ANY BIGATERAL NEGOTIATIONS OF SUCH ISSUES WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE FACILITIES CONTEXT, THERE WOULD BE TWO EXTRANEIOUS FACTORS WORKING TO THE USG'S ADVANTAGE: (A) THE NEED FOR THE GCOB TO CONSIDER THE RESOLUTION OF SIMILAR PROBLEMS WITH CUBA AND (B) THE PROBABLE DESIRE OF PINDLING TO HAVE THE ARCHIPELAGO ISSUE RESOLVED BEFORE HE CALLS AN ELECTION. CUBA, WHICH WOULD BE "ZONE-LOCKED" UNDER A 200-MILE REGIME, HAS AN EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT INTEREST IN FREE THRANSIT THROUGH THE BAHAMAS ARCHIPELAGO AND, TO A LESSER DEGREE, IN CONTINUED ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL FISHING GROUNDS IN THE SOUTHERN BAHAMAS BANKS. WHILE REPORTEDLY WILLING TO MEET THE CUBANS HALFWAY ON BOTH ISSUES AND COUNTING ON CUBA'S OWN STATUS AS AN ARCHIPELAGO TO INCREASE THE LATTER'S FLEXIBILITY, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE GCOB WOULD WISH TO ALIENATE THE U.S. IN THE FACE OF POTENTIALLY TOUGH NEGOTI-

ATIONS WITH CUBA BACKED UP OR NOT BY THE USSR. IN THIS REGARD,
IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT THE SOVIETS HAD MADE THEIR AGREE-
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PAGE 02 NASSAU 01508 02 OF 02 232010Z

MENT TO THE U.S.-GCOB ARCHIPELAGO FORMULA (A MAP OF WHICH
THEY HAVE IN HAND) CONTINGENT UPON THE BAHAMAS WORKING OUT
A BILATERAL UNDERSTANDING WITH CUBA (STUTE 01599, FEB. 1,
1975). IF, IN FACT, PINDLING DOES HOPE TO HAVE THE LOS AND,
PRESUMABLY, THE FACILITIES ISSUES BEHIND HIM BEFORE ELECTIONS,
HE WILL BE WORKING UNDER A GREAT DEAL OF TIME PRESSURE.
ELECTIONS MUST BE HELD IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF CY 1977
AND, GIVEN RECENT INTRA-PARTY FEUDING, COULD TAKE PLACE
EVEN EARLIER.

5. CONCLUSIONS: WHILE MUCH OF THE ABOVE IS SPECULATION,
THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT INCREASING GCOB PESSIMISM ON LOS
AND ABOUT THEIR INTENTION TO STAKE THEIR OWN UNILATERAL
CLAIMS. THE GCOB MIGHT WELL INSIST ON U.S. RECOGNITION
OF THESE CLAIMS AS PART OF THE PRICE FOR THE FACILITIES.
ALTERNATIVELY, WE MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER KEEPING AN OFFER TO
SUPPORT SUCH GCOB CLAIMS IN RESERVE TO TOSS INTO THE QUID
IF THE FACILITY NEGOTIATIONS OTHERWISE RUN INTO TROUBLE.
WE HASTEN TO ADD THAT WE ARE CERTAINLY NOT PROPOSING SUCH
A COURSE OF ACTION AT THIS TIME. FIRST OF ALL, WE MAY NOT
NEED TO INSERT SUCH EXTRANEIOUS MATTERS (FROM USG POINO OF
VIEW) IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY FACILITY NEGOTIATION.
SECOND, THE DISADVANTAGEU FROM A BRMADER LOS POINT OF VIEW
OF MAKING ARCHIPELAGO CONCESSIONS TO GCOB OF A BILATERAL
NATURE, WOULD HAVE TO BE WEIGHED. THIS IS CLEARLY BEYOND
OUR PROVINCE. WE SIMPLY NOTE THAT IF, AS WE SPECULATE
ABOVE, GCOB DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO USE FACILITY AGREEMENT AS A
BASIS FOR GAINING ARCHIPELAGO AND OTHER LOS CMNCESSIONS WE
MAY WISH TO CONSIDER USING ARCHIPELAGO FOR GAINING FACILITCESN
CONCESSIONS. BUT, EVEN IF THE GCOB'S LOS DESIDERATO DO NOT
BECOME ENTAGLED IN THE FACILITIES
NEGOTIATIONS AS PART OF
EITHER THE PRICE OR THE SWEETENER, THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY
BECOME THE SUBJECT OF OTHER BILATERAL USG-GCOB NEGOTIATIONS.
WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS THEM IN CONTEXT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL SEA LIMIT, LAW OF THE SEA, CONTINENTAL SHELF, TWO HUNDRED MILE LIMIT, MILITARY BASE AGREEMENTS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NASSAU01508
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760359-1272
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760932/aaaabbnt.tel
Line Count: 213
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 NASSAU 1427
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2004 by saccheem>; APPROVED <21 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LOS AND FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: PLOS, MARR, BF, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006